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Armor--The Giant of the War!

Kraut-Jolting 'Leviathans' Smash Hun at Own Game

By FRED EGGERS

SINCE the warring days of the Middle Ages, when the gallant knights clothed in 100-odd pounds of lance-proof steel defeated opponents in similar garb, the use of armor has been a major factor in military operations.

The soldier of those days recognized the importance of armored protection for attack and defense, but never before in history has this phase of warfare played such a major role in combat as it does today.

In 1939, when headlines roared the stories of German panzers slashing across Europe, Allied militarists realized the importance of immediate development and exploitation of armor.

And today—ask any frontline doughfoot—he'll tell you that tanks are one of the greatest morale-builders he can think of in combat. To him there is no more beautiful sight than to watch a few tanks rumble along behind him as he moves in on a town.

All-Important Support

He knows that these tanks, with their terrific fire power, can knock out enemy-held strongpoints with kraut-jolting effectiveness. And, even more important, do it with a minimum of casualties. It's not hard to see why the infantry swears by armor.

For it's the tankers who brave the 88s and bazookas and panzers to support the doughboys. It's the tankers who sweat out the flame-throwers and the A-T guns. It's the tankers who slug it out with the krauts and throw the KO punches.

Yes, ask the infantryman—he'll tell you that the armored division is an essential part of the enormous team winning this war. He knows—because he's been there.

Typical of the armored divisions fighting in France today is the 14th. Though its tanks have been rolling through French mud for only a short while, already the unit has gained an important position among the ranks of combat divisions.

Tough Training

Activated at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, the 14th Armored Division completed its preliminary training a year later, and in November, 1943, moved to the Tennessee maneuver area for nine rough weeks of winter battle conditions, set up as close as any training can get to actual combat.

The 14th's record in the States has been one of startling importance from a standpoint of public service. The unit gained nationwide prominence for the spectacular work it had performed during the record-breaking flood of the Arkansas River in May, 1943.

Although one of the newer divisions fighting in France, the 14th Armored is recognized by units it has supported as a well coordinated, smoothly functioning combat team. nI the Maritime Alps, in the engagements between Cirey and Barr in Alsace, elements of the division passed their initial slugfests against the krauts with flying colors.

Cooperation, The Key

"Cooperation is all-important in the functioning of an armored division," stated one 14th officer—and there you have it: The key to the entire operational procedure of the 14th. Cooperation between units.

Capt Homer L. Swager, commanding officer of a tank company, summed it up thusly: "In an attack," he said, "tanks and infantry must work together—one is no good without the other. It is the infantry's job to clean out any anti-tank gun emplacements, bazookas and the like; then, it is the tankers' job to bring to bear on machine gun nests or any other strongpoints holding up the infantry's advance.

"Obviously, there must be close coordination and liaison between the two units—the tankmen have to know exact locations of infantry personnel during an attack, and the doughfeet, naturally, must be able to contact the tanks at an instant's notice."

And Teamwork

It's the teamwork that counts. It's the teamwork and the cooperation between all of the 14th's echelons and commands—from the commanding general of the divi-

They Wait for the Word

And when they get it, it's going to be rough on some hard-headed krauts in the enemy-held town right over the crest of the hill. These men of the 14th Armored know their stuff—know how to deliver that "stuff" with telling effectiveness.
(163rd Sig Photo by Bell)

The Giant Protects!

These doughfeet keep to their holes as a tank from the 14th Armored maneuvers to get in position to do some blasting that will make the infantrymen's job easier. (163rd Sig Photo by Bell)

Teamwork and Hard Training Pay Off for 14th Armored Men

sion down through his staff to the line officers and squad leaders, from the forward echelons back to the rearmost supply depot. It's the teamwork that counts, and the teamwork which has been stressed.

And teamwork, combined with the 14th's 22 months of training, makes for a hardhitting, effective combat team.

The officers and men of the 14th have been well-trained for their respective jobs. Many of them are "old army" men, and have witnessed development of the use of armor in the American army from the days when the theory of tanks was a militarist's dream.

Brig Gen A. C. Smith, commanding general of the division, is just such a man. A West Point graduate, Class of 1917, Gen Smith has been in close contact with the development of armor since its earliest days. One of his instructors at West Point was Maj Gen Ada R. Chaffee, recognized as the pioneer and father of armor in the American army.

In The First War

Gen Smith saw action in the First World War, assigned to the 3rd Cavalry. He was then made secretary to the General Staff of the 7th Corps, followed by the assignment of aide-de-camp to the commanding general of the 1st Division.

General Smith has been closely associated with armor's development since those early days, has held command positions in a variety of armored units. To mention a few, he was G-3 of the 4th Armored Division for a year, CO of the 37th Armored Regiment, followed soon by his promotion to Brigadier General, when he was placed in command of the 14th's Combat Command "A." In July, 1944, he became division commander, following General Prichard's transfer overseas as commander of the veteran 1st Armored Division.

Throughout General Smith's thirty-two-year Army career he has been thoroughly schooled in every phase of military tactics, with particular stress laid to the application of armored teams in combat.

Thoroughly Trained

And a similar situation exists throughout the division — every officer and man thoroughly trained to do a job. In the States a special officers' training class was set up within the division, so that every new officer was schooled in armored warfare.

In tracing development and use of armor from pre-World War I days to the present, one important factor is self-evident. And that is, the fundamental theory behind the employment of armor in warfare has never altered during its 32 years of existence. Tanks were invented in the First World War for one primary purpose — to insure the immunity of soldiers against machine guns and to combat machine gun fire—and today, basically, tanks are used by the 14th and other divisions for that same purpose.

A Tank's Origin

The use of the word "tanks" in reference to the huge, lumbering blunderbusses of the First World War has an interesting origin. The British, credited with first using tanks, were quite proud of their new war weapon, for its surprise value. As a matter of fact, whenever the curious asked just what in hell was under the huge canvas covers, so closely guarded, they were informed, with usual blaze British glibness: "Why, they are tanks—er, water tanks." This was in furtherance of a plan to deliberately deceive the enemy. The name stuck.

At Cambrai, during World War I, the krauts got their first taste of this terrifying new weapon in strength. The 6-ton tank had either one 30 caliber machine gun or one 37 mm gun, while the 40 ton Mark VIII had 2 six pounders and four 30 caliber machine guns each.

In this initial tank attack a large number of the vehicles pushed toward the German lines, and the krauts took off in disorganized retreat. In time, of course, the German maneuvers became quite proficient against the British light tank, but at first the iron monsters had the upper hand.

Soon thereafter the Germans had a reasonable facsimile of the British tank in the field. But there were no tank versus tank battles during the First World War—the Armistice was signed too soon.

However, the success of these first tanks, awkward as they were, had proven the enormous potentialities of this weapon as a mobile striking force.

Tanks were later used by the French in their fight against the Riffs in Africa. The Italians also used them in Abyssinia, as did the Spaniards in their country. The tank was coming into its own.

After World War I came Hitler's eventual rise to power and his plans for conquest. Cooperating with his plans, the German militarists worked for several years on the strategy to be employed in conquering Europe, England, and Africa. Their strategy wasn't complicated—in fact, it was ridiculously simple: merely have two powerful striking factors which could move with lightning speed, followed by infantry for occupational and mopping up purposes.

These striking forces were aircraft and—tanks. The Germans had remembered that day at Cambrai.

Dummy Tanks

The Treaty at Versailles had forbidden the Germans use of tanks. From 1924 on they used mock tanks fashioned from beaverboard and studied tank tactics using motor vehicles. In 1939 the Germans put their strategy into execution, and it worked—for a while.

The first mechanized brigade within the American army, consisting of motorized infantry, tanks, and some cavalry, was formed in 1928 under command of Gen Voorhis, who worked with such men as Gen Chaffee and others at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

American militarists realized the role which tanks were to play in defeating Germany. Our army had never discounted the value of tanks, has never been without them from 1918 to the present day. The present fast type, however, was not used to any great extent until the invention of the track and volute suspension system in 1933.

Prove Their Worth

The African campaign, in which United States armored divisions played a vital part, is now history. That campaign proved once and for all the military value of tanks and armored vehicles in combat. For the Battle of Africa, unorthodox and wide open as it was, resulted in the Allies' first victory over the Germans.

What to Hitler and Rommel had been the cause for all their success, also became their failure. For with a greater strategist in the use of their own type of weapon, they were defeated.

On the desert, when the enemy would form at a particular land barrier—a wadi was the usual barrier—the tanks, which had formed the striking force that threw him back, withdrew for the infantry, artillery and the engineers to clear the way for another thrust at his retreating columns.

Thus, in one battle after another, every obstacle the enemy presented was overcome. The combination which has become such an important force in this war had won the first phase.

In Sicily, mountainous as it was, armor was little used. Infantry, artillery and engineers alone were still the key to mountains.

Skeptics were beginning to say that the day of armor was over. Armor, they said, had served its purpose in the war and now was the time for the Allies to get back to fundamentals.

But the commanders desired to continue the buildup of their armor. In more mountainous Italy

A Tank Passes Through

Some of the destruction tossed into this once kraut-held village comes from the efficient work of such giants as this 14th Armored tank pictured passing through on the way to a new location.
(163rd Sig Photo by Bell)

'The Doughboy Appreciates---'

This infantryman hugs the side of a tank with his rifle pointed into the dense German forest which is the next fighting ground. It's a comforting feeling to have that big boy's support.
(163rd Sig Photo by Lowery)

Armor Pounds Out New Blows

Insurance Policy Of Tanks, TDs Proves Its Value

Gen Clark brought along his armored battalions with each infantry division.

Insurance Policy

Then came Anzio with its four-month stalemate. Along came the armor. Commanders were still taking with them their insurance policy.

And the armor came into its own again after the breakout from the Beachhead. Tanks carrying infantry, tanks attacking through enemy defenses, tanks driving up the main roads kept up the momentum of the attack until the high mountains 50 miles beyond Rome called for the solid infantry line again.

But they had proved themselves again in this one instance. They had been worth retaining for these many months.

When the great assault began in Western France, armor was brought along. Armor kept building up behind the very narrow perimeter of that little beachhead.

And then — wham! Armor cut loose everywhere. Armor swept through the lines in a never-ending stream. It fanned out and overtook Paris. It passed the lines of the last war. It went beyond any expectations. It prevented months and years of bloody battle in one bold sweep. And Hitler's panzer ideas were used against him again in such force that he lost another of his fortress installations.

Because before we got through mopping up, France was practically cleared of the enemy and the Allies were hammering at the Siegfried defense inside Germany.

Corps Use of Armor

And the VI Corps, moving up from the south of France, made plenty of use of its armor. Broad sweeps of land were covered by tanks of the 753rd, 756th and 191st Tank Battalions. And ever present were destroyers of the 601st, 636th and 645th Tank Destroyer Battalions.

These units developed the use of infantry-carrying vehicles to the maximum.

Virtually every fighting element of the army is represented in the armored division. Made up originally of elements of the Regular Army's infantry, cavalry, and artillery units, the patch worn by every armored soldier still bears the colors of the organizations which gave it birth—red for the artillery, blue for the infantry, and yellow for the cavalry, bound together by the mobility of the track and the power of the thunderbolt.

In speaking of the functions of various units within the 14th Armored Division, it would not be fair, or true, to state that one unit plays a more important role in combat than another. The tanks and the infantry face the enemy and take the ground, but these units would be unable to function without the rest of the team—the staff, the signal units, the medics, engineers, ordnance, artillery, cavalry, and quartermaster. Each has its own role.

Combat Commands

Without going into the tactical organization too much, it can be said that the 14th is comprised of "combat commands," similar in organization to foot infantry, regimental combat teams, with, however, far greater fire power and personnel strength. Within these combat commands are representative units of all the division's combat elements—in other words, if need be each command can work separately and independently of the others.

The tank and infantry battalions within the commands comprise the forces' main striking power. The cavalry's mission is that of reconnaissance. And these three elements, cooperating with each other, comprise a combat team of terrific potency.

Maj Robert H. Townsend, executive officer of one of the 14th's infantry battalions, explained the functioning of the infantry with the tanks. He, too, stressed cooperation between the two elements.

"In an attack," he said, "tanks and infantry work as protective units for each other—it's easy to see why cooperation and a thorough understanding of each other's problems are so important.

A vital service unit within the 14th is its ordnance battalion. The highly trained men within this battalion have the all-important task of maintaining every piece of equipment in the division — from 32-ton tanks to typewriters and watches. That's a helluva job, when you consider that not a man in an armored division walks. Or when you realize the tremendous armament within such a division.

The 14th's ordnance battalion contains more highly-skilled technicians than most other organizations of its type. According to Lt Col George M. Megica, commanding officer of the unit, civilian occupations have played a vital part in assigning men within the battalion.

To mention a few of the specially qualified occupations represented within the battalion, there are: mechanics, machinists, electricians, metal men, welders, instrument men, watch repairmen, artillery mechanics, typewriter repairmen, and highly-skilled parts men.

"In the entire battalion," declared Col Megica, "there are only 30 basics, or untrained men. Nearly every man has some special skill."

The Letter Companies

Letter companies of the battalion are assigned to each of the 14th's Combat Commands and are in close contact with the fighting units. The main purpose of this is to forestall evacuation of vehicles, guns, or other equipment which can be repaired on the spot. As a result, men of the battalion have made repairs on equipment under every type of enemy fire. They have also overhauled captured equipment for possible use against the enemy.

Sometimes, in fact, men of the ordnance unit have been in position to be of direct assistance to doughfeet on the line. Take the case of Tec 3s Anthony and Benedict Murty and Tec 4 Hector Dulude, who received Bronze Stars for a little assitance they rendered infantrymen recently.

The boys were on the line doing a routine repair job on a vehicle when the krauts got active with 88s and mortars. The area got so hot that a nearby infantry unit was stopped in an extremely precarious spot. Only hope for cover was a liberated pillbox, and its heavy steel doors refused to open.

Realizing that something had to be done quickly, the ordnance men raced up to the doors of the pillbox, carrying their equipment with them. The enemy fire was increasing all the time. Unmindful, the boys went to work with acetylene torches, sweating out the painfully slow task of cutting those doors open. They finally accomplished their task, saved that infantry unit from severe casualties.

So if you remark to a 14th Armored ordnance man that he's rear echelon, you're looking for a Purple Heart, brother.

Eager to Go

In telling personal anecdotes about men in the 14th Armored Division one important fact seems to be obvious. That is, the eagerness with which they undertake an assignment, no matter how rough, and the ready manner in which men of one unit compliment members of another. The old teamwork idea. Esprit de corps, cooperation, morale—call it what you will. The 14th's training has paid off.

There's the story, for example, on a 14th Infantry outfit which had fought hard to take a town from

On to Battle

There are still battles to be won before American armor rolls down the streets of Berlin and this tank speeds on toward a new objective as infantrymen watch it move.
(163rd Sig Photo by Lowery)

In the Artillery Role

When the going gets gooey and maneuverability awaits dry terrain, the tankers just don't sit back and cool their heels. Their role as stable artillery has loomed big in this war. (Courtesy PWB)

'Close Call Club' Has Large Membership

the krauts. The fighting had been rough and had gone on for several days. The boys were tired when they finally occupied the town.

Then the word came that they were to be relieved. Think they were happy? Hell, no. They wanted to stay up in that town they'd fought so hard for!

Close Call Club

The men of the 14th Armored have inaugurated their own "Close Call" club. Membership qualifications aren't as rigid as the Elks—but they are quite a bit more ticklish. Just risk your neck without any greater aftermath than having your hair stand on end for awhile. Then you automatically become a member.

Pfcs John Cunningham and Joseph Caffrey of a 14th Armored Medical Detachment joined, quite suddenly, one day. They were evacuating a casualty under fire, when they noticed vicious machine gun tracers heading their way. With their casualty, they took off for the safety of a hillock.

Huddled behind their safe retreat, they watched the tracers skim over their heads, thankful for the wall behind them and the gun.

They received quite a jolt when the wall turned out to be straw.

Sgt Louis P. Gold, Cpl John H. Young, and Cpl Glenn D. Blankenhorn are "Close Call" members, too, but they don't want to undergo their initiation rites again.

Their reconnaissance section was moving up during a 14th Armored attack. Parked in a bivouac area after a hard day chasing krauts, the boys were resting on the warm hood of their half-track.

Suddenly mortars opened up. The boys awakened, took off for the cover of the rear of their vehicle—and not a mortar shell too soon, either.

They could hear the next one coming. Then they heard the blast and felt the concussion and hugged the ground.

The hood of their vehicle had

The 14th is made up of soldiers—armor-trained and well-trained, but personally much like any other group of GIs in France.

Fighting Men

The men call a quarter-ton a "peep," which has always been "jeep" to the old infantry division—but outside of that the boys are the same. They think the same and gripe the same.

And they know how to fight.

Their record since coming to France proves that. The officers and men have applied their intensive training, and, though they have faced a war-wise enemy, have won time and time again. One 14th tank platoon, for example, was cited by the division commander for knocking out nine kraut panzers. Five GI tanks against nine, almost 2 to 1 odds—that's combat ability and then some.

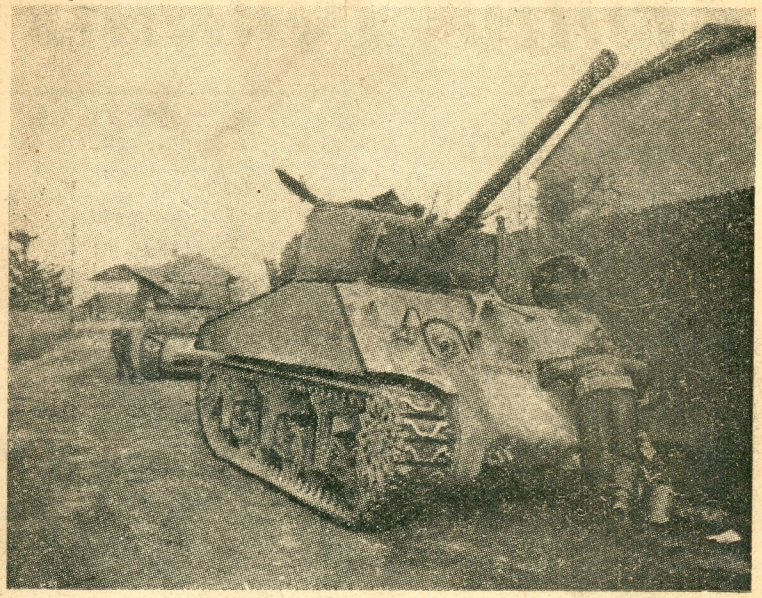
Another 14th tank unit stemmed a kraut attack some 150-200 strong, annihilating the squareheads like duckpins in a bowling-alley.

The men of the 14th Armored were among the group commended by Maj Gen Edward H. Brooks, VI Corps commander, in a recent order of the day congratulating Corps divisions on their work in the Vosges Mountains.

So the 14th Armored Division is carving its niche among the respected fighting units destroying the enemy on all fronts. Already it has passed its initial combat tests and has proven itself a tough, aggressive team.

This team will continue to function as such until the final day when the swastika is buried beneath the rubble of Berlin. For the men of the 14th know: It's teamwork that counts. It's teamwork that wins wars.

Ordnance, Front and Center

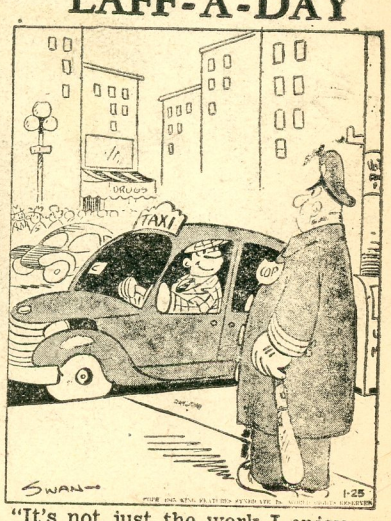


Ordnance men of the 14th Armored are specialists of repair; they have to be, considering the enormous amount of vehicles they must doctor. The KO'd giant will be back on its feet before long. (163rd Sig Photo)

Iron Hen and Brood

Tanks may be iron hens, all right, but they lay some wicked eggs in kraut nests. And this tank, trailed by slogging doughfeet, is on its way to do just exactly that. (Sig Corps Photo)

LAFF-A-DAY



"It's not just the work I enjoy—

CUTIES ·:· By E. Simms Campbell

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"Tch—tch—tch . . . if I only had confidence in these soldiers she